

868

The Diamond Sutra, the world's
first printed book (DUAN HUANG,
Western China)

868

First printed book in
the world was made in
China.

868 AD

The World's oldest printed book
was made in China, from as
far back as 868 AD.

They cut the characters for
each page in a block of wood.
They inked the surface, pressed
paper against it, and took
away a printed page. One copy
after another could be made.

China made the First Printed Book

The "Diamond Sutra" inaugurate a
communications revolution.

China under the TANG dynasty produced the world's first printed book, the "Diamond Sutra". It was made from wood blocks and contained both script and illustrations. Movable type, engraved on clay blocks appeared in China in the 11th century. The spread of books that followed laid

little impact on the mass of the population, who remained largely illiterate, until the late 20th century? But printing greatly facilitated the consolidation of central authority by the mandarin bureaucracy, and, especially, under the Sung Dynasty (which succeeded) gave impetus to commercial expansion by the circulation of paper money (introduced in China c. 650) and credit notes.

In the same era, China invented gunpowder and the modern compass. For centuries, the Chinese used gunpowder only for fireworks and the compass not at all.

Danegeld

Land tax first levied in
England to buy off raiding
Danes

Collected by English ruler
until 12th century.